OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA.
CIRCULAR OF INFORMATION No. 11
JUNE, 1908

THE CATTLE TICK.

The destruction of the Texas fever tick is the first step necessary to secure a free cattle market. Certain portions of Oklahoma are below the Federal quarantine line and it will be necessary to get rid of the tick before such portions of the state can be placed above the line. This is not an impossible task, as it has been accomplished in other states and it will not be long in Oklahoma until the greater portion of the state will not be restricted in its cattle business by any quarantine line.

It is not a difficult matter to rid a farm of ticks if the work is begun at the proper time and is carefully looked after. If the stockman would for one season look carefully after this matter he would not have any further trouble. The tick is a parasite and will not develop except when attached to some animal. By greasing or handpicking the cattle, any farmer, with the few head of cattle usually kept on the farm, can rid his stock of ticks. But if the work is going to be done at all it must be well done. Not a single tick should be allowed to mature and fall to the ground. By beginning now and destroying all of the ticks on the cattle, and then go over them every two weeks until October or November and one can clean up their farm or pasture.

The tick question means a great deal to southern farmers, as it has cost them a lot of money, and as long as we have infected pastures the tick will continue to cost the farmer a good portion of the profits of his cattle business. The tick is largely responsible for the poor grades of cattle common on the farms of the infected area. It is risk to buy high priced cattle from the north and turn them on infected pastures. We cannot grade up the dairy herds as rapidly as we otherwise would on account of the possible loss of high priced stock with Texas fever. With the tick out of Oklahoma, the dairy business, and cattle raising in general, would become immensely profitable, as well bred cattle could be placed on every farm without danger of loss from fever.

Greasing cattle with a mop or brush is the cheapest and easiest manner of getting rid of the ticks where only a few cattle are to be handled. The fully developed ticks should be picked off and put into a can of oil or burned. Grease the cattle once a week at the start or until they are free from ticks, then once every two weeks as long as you can find young ticks on them. Crude oil is one of the cheapest and best remedies, or a mixture of kerosene and crude oil in equal parts to which is added sulphur to each two gallons of the mixture. Thoroughly rub the oil on the legs and under parts of the body and especially on all parts of the body where ticks are usually found.

If the pastures of the farm are so arranged that one portion of the pastures can be kept idle during the summer and fall or the fall and winter the ticks will all die out on the pasture not in use. If all stock of every kind is kept out of a pasture from July 1st until December 1st or from September 1st until April 1st of the following year, all ticks will be destroyed in the unused pasture. If a pasture is to be divided, two fences should be run across so as to leave a lane about ten feet wide between the used and unused pastures. All grass and rubbish on this lane should be burned at the end of the season. Before putting any cattle on the clean pasture they should be examined for ticks. A little carelessness here will put ticks into the clean pastures and nothing whatever will have been gained by the trouble.

Begin now to clean up the cattle; see that no ticks mature and drop off to lay eggs, and by doing the work thoroughly for the remainder of the season all infection can be destroyed. Townships and counties should take up the work in earnest, every farmer see that his cattle are looked after and by January 1st every county that goes into the work in earnest could be free from infection and could have the privilege of an unrestricted market for their cattle. To be above the quarantine line means a great deal to the live stock interests of a community and in order to get above the line it is absolutely necessary to get rid of the cattle tick.

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